

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 5550

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PNOR GR US

SUBJECT: US GREEK BASE NEGOTIATIONS - HELLENIKON
AND ELEFSIS

REF: STATE 171332

1. FOLLOWING RECEIPT OF REFTTEL, STEARNS SAW CALOGERAS THIS AM AND HANDED HIM NOTE OUTLINING US COMPROMISE PROPOSAL ON ELEFSIS PIER, LAST SENTENCE OF WHICH HAD BEEN AMENDED IN ACCORDANCE WITH DOD'S SUGGESTED WORDING. STEARNS POINTED OUT THAT OUR PROPOSAL ENVISAGED MODEST NUMBER OF SHIP VISITS AND WAS DESIGNED TO ASSURE THAT PIER DID NOT STAND IDLE DURING TIME ITS ULTIMATE DISPOSITION WAS UNDER STUDY. GOG WOULD IN PRACTICE BE ABLE TO MONITOR FREQUENCY OF MONTHLY VISITS SINCE WE WOULD PROVIDE ADVANCE NOTIFICATION OF PLANNED UTILIZATION OF PIER BY US SHIPS.

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2. CALOGERAS READ THE NOTE CAREFULLY AND SAID THAT IN HIS

PERSONAL OPINION GOG WOULD HAVE NO REPEAT NO PROBLEM WITH MAXIMUM OF FIVE MONTHLY VISITS DURING TRANSITIONAL PERIOD. HE THOUGHT HOWEVER THAT BITSIOS AND CARAMANLIS WOULD PREFER TO LIMIT LENGTH OF TRANSITIONAL PERIOD TO SIX MONTHS (I.E., END OF CALENDAR YEAR 1975) RATHER THAN ONE YEAR. STEARNS OBSERVED THAT LIMITATION OF THIS KIND WOULD MEAN THAT WE HAD USE OF PIER FOR ONLY THREE MONTHS SINCE WE PLANNED NO UTILIZATION OF PIER IN AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER. CALOGERAS SAID THAT HE WOULD POINT THIS OUT TO BITSIOS. HE THOUGHT IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE FOR GOG TO AGREE TO PERMIT US NAVY TO USE PIER UNTIL END OF CALENDAR YEAR 1975 AND UNDERTAKE TO CONSIDER EXTENSION OF TRANSITIONAL PERIOD FOR SIX MONTHS IF FINAL DISPOSITION OF PIER HAD NOT BEEN DECIDED BY END OF DECEMBER. HE SAID HE WOULD DISCUSS THIS ALTERNATIVE WITH BITSIOS.

3. ON US PRESENCE AT HELLENIKON, STEARNS NOTED THAT GREEK AND US POSITIONS WERE STILL FAIRLY FAR APART. US SIDE HAD EXPRESSED WILLINGNESS TO REDUCE US PERSONNEL AT HELLENIKON TO 1150. GREEK SIDE HAD INDICATED THAT THEY COULD NOT AGREE TO LEVEL HIGHER THAN 450 US PERSONNEL. CLEARLY CONSIDERABLE WORK WOULD BE NECESSARY BOTH IN ATHENS AND IN WASHINGTON TO BRIDGE THIS GAP. US SIDE WAS HOWEVER AWARE OF GOG'S DESIRE TO SHOW VISIBLE PROGRESS IN BASE NEGOTIATIONS AND FOR THIS REASON WASHINGTON HAD AGREED TO BEGIN IMMEDIATELY TO MOVE TOWARD 1150 LEVEL. THIS WOULD ENABLE GREEK SIDE TO STATE, IF IT CHOSE TO DO SO, THAT AGREEMENT HAD BEEN REACHED TO REMOVE APPROXIMATELY 400 US PERSONNEL FROM HELLENIKON OVER COMING MONTHS. WASHINGTON WOULD MEANWHILE BE EXAMINING THE POSSIBILITY OF SOME FURTHER REDUCTIONS AND STEARNS HOPED THAT CALOGERAS AND HIS MILITARY COLLEAGUES WOULD SEE WHAT COULD BE DONE ABOUT RAISING THEIR PROPOSED CEILING OF 450 US PERSONNEL.

4. CALOGERAS EXPRESSED GENERAL SATISFACTION WITH THIS APPROACH, ALTHOUGH HE STATED HIS BELIEF THAT HELLENIC AIR FORCE'S INTENTION TO HAVE NO MORE THAN 600-650 GREEK PERSONNEL AT HELLENIKON EFFECTIVELY LIMITED GREEK SIDE'S MARGIN FOR COMPROMISE. STEARNS ARGUED THAT US SIDE'S FLEXIBILITY WAS SIMILARLY LIMITED BY LYNCH-PIN ROLE OF CONFIDENTIAL

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HELLENIKON IN RELATION TO OTHER US FACILITIES IN GREECE. THERE WERE CERTAIN LEVELS BELOW WHICH WE COULD NOT GO WITHOUT ADVERSELY AFFECTING OUR OVERALL MILITARY CAPABILITIES IN THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN.

5. IN CONCLUSION, CALOGERAS SAID THAT HE WOULD DISCUSS THESE MATTERS WITH BITSIOS IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS AND BE BACK IN TOUCH WITH STEARNS AS SOON AS HE HAD OBTAINED

THE FOREIGN MINISTERS REACTION. HE THOUGHT THIS WAS
LIKELY TO BE EARLY NEXT WEEK. CALOGERAS ALSO SAID THAT
HE WOULD WISH TO DISCUSS FURTHER WITH STEARNS THE LINE
THAT THE GREEK GOVERNMENT WOULD TAKE IN BRIEFING PRESS
ON THE RESULTS OF THE RECENTLY CONCLUDED SUB-GROUP MEETINGS.
HE UNDERSTOOD THAT THE US SIDE DID NOT FAVOR
A FORMAL STATEMENT OF COMMUNIQUE AND BELIEVED THAT NEITHER
CARAMANLIS NOR BITSIOS WOULD PRESS FOR THIS. GREEK SIDE
WOULD HOWEVER WISH TO BE SURE THAT WHATEVER IT SAID TO
THE PRESS WAS CONSISTENT WITH THE US SIDE'S UNDERSTANDING
OF DECISIONS REACHED IN THE SUB-GROUP MEETINGS.
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